

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Timothy Charley, #265146,
a/k/a Timothy L. Charley,

Petitioner,

VS.

Willie Eagleton,

Respondent.

C/A No. 6:11-107-CMC-KFM

Report and Recommendation

Petitioner files this habeas action pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2254 challenging his 2004 conviction for armed robbery. Petitioner did not file a direct appeal, but he appears to have filed two applications for post-conviction relief. Additionally, he alleges he filed a Writ of Mandamus with the South Carolina Supreme Court which he states was dismissed pursuant to “Curry v. Key.” *Key v. Currie*, 406 S.E.2d 356 (S.C. 1991)(holding that original jurisdiction will only be exercised for an extraordinary reason). Petitioner asks this Court to vacate his conviction and order his release from custody.

Under established local procedure in this judicial district, a careful review has been made of the *pro se* petition, pursuant to the procedural provisions of 28 U.S.C. § 1915, 28 U.S.C. § 1915A, and the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996. The review has been conducted in light of the following precedents: *Denton v. Hernandez*, 504 U.S. 25 (1992); *Neitzke v. Williams*, 490 U.S. 319 (1989); *Haines v. Kerner*, 404 U.S. 519 (1972); *Nasim v. Warden, Maryland House of Correction*, 64 F.3d 951 (4th Cir. 1995)(*en banc*); and *Todd v. Baskerville*, 712 F.2d 70 (4th Cir. 1983).

This court is required to liberally construe *pro se* documents, *Estelle v. Gamble*, 429 U.S. 97 (1976), holding them to a less stringent standard than those drafted by attorneys, *Hughes v. Rowe*, 449 U.S. 5 (1980)(*per curiam*). Even under this less stringent standard, however, the *pro se* petition is subject to summary dismissal. The mandated liberal construction afforded *pro se* pleadings means that if the court can reasonably read the pleadings to state a valid claim on which the plaintiff could prevail, it should do so, but a district court may not rewrite a petition to “conjure up questions never squarely presented” to the court. *Beaudett v. City of Hampton*, 775 F.2d 1274, 1278 (4th Cir. 1985). The requirement of liberal construction does not mean that the court can ignore a clear failure in the pleading to allege facts which set forth a claim currently cognizable in a federal district court. *Weller v. Department of Social Services*, 901 F.2d 387 (4th Cir. 1990).

The petition for a writ of habeas corpus under 28 U.S.C. § 2254 in the above-captioned case should be dismissed because the petitioner has not exhausted his state remedies. With respect to his convictions and sentences, the petitioner's sole federal remedy is a writ of habeas corpus under 28 U.S.C. § 2254, which can be sought only after the petitioner has exhausted his state court remedies. See 28 U.S.C. § 2254(b)(1); *Woodford v. Ngo*, 548 U.S. 81, 92 (2006) (noting that a “state prisoner is generally barred from obtaining federal habeas relief unless the prisoner has properly presented his or her claims through one ‘complete round of the State’s established appellate review process’”). Petitioner did not file a direct appeal. He alleges he filed two applications for post-conviction relief, one of which may be pending. Furthermore, Petitioner filed a petition for Writ of Mandamus with the South Carolina Supreme Court. A Writ of Mandamus, however,

does not satisfy the exhaustion requirement set forth in 28 U.S.C. § 2254(b). *Durkin v. Davis*, 538 F.2d 1037, 1041-42 (4th Cir. 1976)(a petition filed in the original jurisdiction of a State's highest court does not satisfy the exhaustion requirement of 28 U.S.C. § 2254(b)). As a result, the grounds raised in the § 2254 petition have not been considered and addressed by courts of the State of South Carolina.

If a South Carolina prisoner's application for post-conviction relief is denied or dismissed by a Court of Common Pleas, he or she can file an appeal in that post-conviction case. See S.C. Code Ann. § 17-27-100; *Knight v. State*, 325 S.E.2d 535 (s.c. 1985). In fact, if the petitioner files an application for post-conviction relief and the Court of Common Pleas for Orangeburg County denies post-conviction relief or dismisses the petitioner's application for post-conviction relief, the petitioner must seek appellate review by the Supreme Court of South Carolina of that disposition from the Court of Common Pleas for Orangeburg County, or federal collateral review of the grounds raised in his application for post-conviction relief will be barred by a procedural default. See *Whitley v. Bair*, 802 F.2d 1487, 1500 & n. 27 (4th Cir. 1986); *Mason v. Procnier*, 748 F.2d 852, 853-854 (4th Cir. 1984); and *Strader v. Allsbrook*, 656 F.2d 67, 68 (4th Cir. 1981).

The United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit has held that South Carolina's Uniform Post-Conviction Procedure Act, which is currently codified at § 17-27-10 *et seq.*, South Carolina Code of Laws, is a viable state-court remedy. See *Miller v. Harvey*, 566 F.2d 879, 880-81 (4th Cir. 1977); and *Patterson v. Leeke*, 556 F.2d 1168, 1170-73 & n. 1 (4th Cir. 1977).

Since the petitioner has a viable state court remedy that has not been fully utilized, the United States District Court for the District of South Carolina should not keep this case on its docket while the petitioner is exhausting his state remedies. See *Galloway v. Stephenson*, 510 F. Supp. 840, 846 (M.D.N.C. 1981): "When state court remedies have not been exhausted, absent special circumstances, a federal habeas court may not retain the case on its docket, pending exhaustion, but should dismiss the petition." See also *Pitchess v. Davis*, 421 U.S. 482, 490 (1975); and *Lawson v. Dixon*, 3 F.3d 743, 749 n. 4 (4th Cir. 1993), where the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit noted: "[E]xhaustion is not a jurisdictional requirement, but rather arises from interests of comity between the state and federal courts."

RECOMMENDATION

Accordingly, it is recommended that the petition for a writ of habeas corpus in the above-captioned case be dismissed *without prejudice* and without issuance and service of process upon the respondents. See *Erline Co. S.A. v. Johnson*, 440 F.3d 648, 656 (4th Cir. 2006)(in both habeas corpus and *in forma pauperis* proceedings district courts are charged with the duty of independently screening initial filings, and dismissing those actions that plainly lack merit); and the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996.

February 2, 2011
Greenville, South Carolina

s/Kevin F. McDonald
United States Magistrate Judge

The petitioner's attention is directed to the important notice on the next page.

Notice of Right to File Objections to Report and Recommendation

The parties are advised that they may file specific written objections to this Report and Recommendation with the District Judge. Objections must specifically identify the portions of the Report and Recommendation to which objections are made and the basis for such objections. “[I]n the absence of a timely filed objection, a district court need not conduct a de novo review, but instead must ‘only satisfy itself that there is no clear error on the face of the record in order to accept the recommendation.’” *Diamond v. Colonial Life & Acc. Ins. Co.*, 416 F.3d 310 (4th Cir. 2005) (quoting Fed. R. Civ. P. 72 advisory committee’s note).

Specific written objections must be filed within fourteen (14) days of the date of service of this Report and Recommendation. 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1); Fed. R. Civ. P. 72(b); see Fed. R. Civ. P. 6(a), (d). Filing by mail pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 5 may be accomplished by mailing objections to:

Larry W. Propes, Clerk
United States District Court
Room 239
300 East Washington St.
Greenville, South Carolina 29601

Failure to timely file specific written objections to this Report and Recommendation will result in waiver of the right to appeal from a judgment of the District Court based upon such Recommendation. 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1); *Thomas v. Arn*, 474 U.S. 140 (1985); *Wright v. Collins*, 766 F.2d 841 (4th Cir. 1985); *United States v. Schronce*, 727 F.2d 91 (4th Cir. 1984).